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Chairman: Mr. Özügergin (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Turkey)

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In the absence of Mr. Asadi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Özügergin (Turkey), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 93: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation (*continued*) (A/53/60, A/53/62, A/53/63–S/1998/100, A/53/69, A/53/72–S/1998/156, A/53/95–S/1998/311, A/53/96, A/53/124, A/53/155, A/53/168, A/53/204, A/53/296, A/53/371–S/1998/848, A/53/374, A/53/396, A/53/411, A/53/412, A/53/414, A/53/416, A/53/453)

(c) Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (A/53/267, A/53/512)

(f) Implementation of the programme of action of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/53/407)

1. **Ms. Sadik** (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly to be held in July 1999 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/53/407). There was close cooperation in that effort among the organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society groups, particularly non-governmental organizations. She mentioned a number of meetings where that cooperation had been in evidence and said that attention had also been given to the five-year reviews of the implementation of the programmes of action of the other major global conferences or summits.

2. The five-year review of the Cairo Programme of Action was primarily a country-focused exercise emphasizing policy changes and operational experiences at the country level. It sought to draw out the lessons learned, to identify obstacles encountered and propose action for the future. The early results were very encouraging, and indicated that many countries were moving forward in implementing the Programme of Action. Progress had also been reported in the area of reproductive health.

3. Regional consultations had been held in all regions except Europe; the regional meeting for Europe would take place in the near future. The consultations confirmed that the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action had been integrated into a human rights framework and that notable progress had been made in integrating gender concerns into policies and programmes and in building partnerships with groups in civil society. All the regional consultations had endorsed the usefulness of the South-South cooperation modality and had underscored the urgent need for additional financial resources to implement the Programme of Action. The consultation held in Addis Ababa, for example, had developed recommendations for HIV/AIDS prevention, calling for priority to be given to its integration into reproductive health programmes, but recognizing that each country must decide how best to do so, given its financial and personnel constraints. At the meeting organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the League of Arab States, the participants had discussed issues pertaining to international migration, gender equity, the empowerment of women and reproductive health. They had adopted recommendations on actions to be taken at the regional level to enhance the implementation of the Programme of Action.

4. The report of the Secretary-General also mentioned the various round tables and technical meetings which had brought together experts and members of civil society, the preparations for the forthcoming international forum on the implementation of the Programme of Action to be held at The Hague, and the thirty-second session of the Commission on Population and Development. The latter would serve as the preparatory body for the special session and it would consider proposals for action contained in the draft report of the Secretary-General on the further implementation of the Programme of Action which would be submitted to the special session.

5. The Secretary-General had already appealed to Member States to provide additional monies in order to ensure the participation of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, in the work of the preparatory committee and in the special session itself.

6. There would be no renegotiation of the commitments made in Cairo as contained in the Programme of Action. The goal was to have the Preparatory Committee submit to the General Assembly a final text free of brackets.

7. All the regional consultations and technical meetings had underscored that, if the goals of the Conference were to be achieved, efforts must be intensified to meet the funding levels specified in the Programme of Action. Many countries had already made impressive progress in that area, but their ability had been affected by the current financial crisis. She asked donor countries to redouble their efforts to reach the $5.7 billion target for international assistance by the year 2000, as agreed in Cairo. The levelling off of donor contributions was a key concern emerging from the five-year review.

8. **Mr. Hidayat** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that Habitat II had forged a comprehensive plan of action securing specific commitments through an inclusive approach based on partnership, participation and decentralization. The current challenge was to move the process of implementing the Habitat Agenda forward by preparing for the special session scheduled for 2001. Its modalities, scope and organizational arrangements and the roles to be played by the relevant United Nations bodies and civil society in the process must be decided.

9. The Group of 77 and China attached great importance to the Habitat Agenda. There was an urgent need to fulfil the basic human right of shelter. The coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda should be sustained at the highest political level and the broadest possible effort should be made to build on successes, reorganize failure and identify important gaps.

10. While Governments had the primary responsibility for implementing the Habitat Agenda, partnership with the representatives of civil society as well as the support of the international community were of fundamental importance.

11. The alarming projections put forward at the Istanbul Conference with respect to poverty, urbanization and urban violence, had been confirmed by the adverse impact of globalization and the world financial crisis. The prospects offered by partnership and the participatory approach should be fully explored in order to find a solution to those pressing problems and to provide sustainable shelter. Although it was difficult to establish partnerships with the urban poor, the capacities of national and local administrations should be strengthened while the resources to help the poor to help themselves should be increased. There was therefore a need to learn from the programmes and practices that had produced the best results.

12. The Group of 77 and China hoped that the special session to review the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action would lead to the adoption of further concrete steps, to reduce, *inter alia*, infant and maternal mortality and the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and related population problems.

13. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh), referring to preparations for the special session for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, said that the process was crucial and would permit a review of achievements and failures and the charting of an effective future course of action to achieve the objectives of the Conference.

14. Immediately following the adoption of the Cairo Programme of Action, his Government had set up a high-level national committee comprising senior civil servants, representatives of United Nations agencies, development partners and actors of civil society. The Committee had formulated a national plan of action for the implementation of the recommendations of the Cairo Conference. A round table on partnership with civil society, held in Dhaka, had reviewed the implementation of the Programme of Action. Participants had discussed a broad array of issues and stressed the need to strengthen the capacity and the financial stability of small, community-based organizations and various associations. They had learned from Bangladesh's experience about how religious leaders and health officials had collaborated in matters of reproductive health as well as from its women's empowerment programmes.

15. While there was no need to renegotiate the Programme of Action, the international community should support the efforts of developing countries through the provision of additional resources to help them to catch up with their implementation schedule. Such additional resources were needed for training, data collection and analysis within the overall context of capacity-building.

16. His delegation looked forward to the preparatory meetings for the special session, in particular, the International Forum of The Hague. It was important that the inputs from all the preparatory meetings should be made available to delegations. In that connection, it would be useful for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to organize briefings on the status of preparations in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at Headquarters. Similar initiatives could be undertaken at the national and regional levels. Young people and representatives of civil society should also be involved in the preparatory process; measures should also be taken to ensure the participation of the least developed countries in the preparatory meetings and in the special session of the General Assembly. The international community should make extrabudgetary resources available for that purpose.

17. **Mr. Wedenig** (Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, the associated country Cyprus and the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Iceland, aligned themselves with his statement.

18. The European Union fully supported the goals and principles agreed in Istanbul. It was continuing its efforts to

make the Habitat Agenda better known to its citizens and therefore welcomed the review and appraisal of the Habitat Agenda. The European Union believed that the review process should not involve any renegotiation. As the primary responsibility for the Habitat Agenda remained with Governments, particular attention should be paid to reviewing the overall progress made at the national and local level as well as to disseminating the best practices. Moreover, the broadest possible participation in preparations for the review should be encouraged; in that connection, the formula of partner hearings that had been employed by Committee II of the Habitat II Conference, should be used. The implementation of the Habitat Agenda and Agenda 21 should go hand in hand, especially at the local level, to create synergy and enhance all dimensions of sustainable development. The development of participatory mechanisms to involve all stakeholders in the decision-making process should also be encouraged.

19. Regarding the organizational aspects of the preparatory process, the European Union would like concise and focused arrangements which would include the participation of different stakeholders, especially local authorities, and recognize the extensive preparations that needed to be made at the national level.

20. The European Union deemed it urgent to revitalize the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements. The Centre should adopt more transparent and responsible management methods. The European Union therefore welcomed the fact that the revision of the Centre's organizational structure and substantive role seemed to have reached a decisive stage. While some progress had been achieved, further substantial steps needed to be taken towards reform.

21. With respect to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, General Assembly resolution 52/188 provided an excellent framework for the review and appraisal of progress achieved. The resolution stressed that there would be no renegotiation of the existing agreements contained therein; it defined the organizational aspects of the preparatory body and the special session and stressed the need for the effective participation of all stakeholders according to modalities similar to those applied in Cairo.

22. In 1999, there would be approximately 6 billion people in the world, nearly 150 million of whom would lack access to family planning services and to the means to protect their reproductive health. In order to check population growth, countries must, in particular, continue their political support for the Programme of Action. The Cairo Conference had demonstrated that solutions to population issues could respect human rights. More moderate demographic growth could indeed be achieved on the basis of individual freedom of choice, particularly with regard to reproduction and birth spacing. The exercise of those rights was also facilitated by a favourable socio-cultural, economic and educational environment. In that context, it was essential to ensure women's access to confidential, affordable health services that provided advice on and assistance in all aspects of health. The Programme of Action rightly integrated population in the broader context of sustainable development by simultaneously addressing issues such as poverty alleviation, gender equality, the empowerment of women, education and the environment. International cooperation in the sphere of population and development remained essential in supporting national efforts to implement the recommendations adopted in Cairo. The European Union therefore looked forward to participating in an action-oriented review process.

23. **Ms. King** (United States of America), referring to Habitat II, said that the information contained in the reports of the Secretary-General on that subject (A/53/267 and A/53/512) was useful. She reaffirmed her country's commitment to the goals of the Habitat Agenda and urged the international community to continue its active implementation.

24. The Istanbul Conference had assigned to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements a vital role in achieving the goals of the Habitat Agenda, which meant that it must operate with complete integrity and transparency in order to provide real leadership in achieving sustainable development in urban areas. Unfortunately, the Centre's management and financial problems had undermined its ability to implement the decisions taken at the Habitat II Conference. Her delegation welcomed the efforts of the revitalization team to address the financial concerns raised in the audits conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services and looked forward to its recommendations on reforming the Centre's management and organizational structure in order to reinvigorate it in a transparent and consultative manner, which was the only means of revitalizing it and restoring the confidence of both donors and those benefiting from the Centre's work.

25. The revitalization of the Centre was particularly important as the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda drew near. It was to be hoped that the Secretary-General would continue to ensure that the Centre met the reform benchmarks established by the Commission on Human Settlements at its sixteenth session. Her delegation would participate actively

in the preparations for the review, whose extremely ambitious schedule might have to be reconsidered.

26. Turning to the five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development, she said that the United States had taken a number of steps since the Cairo Conference: scientific research was focusing more heavily on health issues peculiar to women. A growing number of research institutes and non-governmental organizations were interested in such issues as refugee reproductive health. The number of teenage pregnancies continued to decline as a result of information provided to young people on the importance of delaying sexual activity, contraceptive use and sexually transmitted diseases. President Clinton had established an inter-agency Presidential council on women to follow up the Beijing Conference. A number of steps had been taken with a view to empowering women and protecting their rights, particularly measures to prevent violence against women, and trafficking in women and children, and to promote the participation of women in decision-making and leadership roles.

27. At the international level, the United States was the largest bilateral contributor in the field of population, including family planning, HIV/AIDS research, maternal and child health and other key goals of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

28. Official development assistance had indeed declined in real terms in recent years. Increasingly, however, it was being replaced by funds from non-governmental organizations and private foundations.

29. Her delegation hoped that the special session of the General Assembly would ensure that population and reproductive health issues remained core concerns of national health care systems; that donors provided various essential inputs to population and development activities in countries that lacked the necessary resources (commodities, specialized training, data collection for monitoring and evaluation); that political leaders and public opinion supported the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development in both donor and recipient countries; that new resources were mobilized, particularly in the private commercial sector, for reproductive health services; that the efforts of countries which allocated substantial resources to the implementation of the Programme of Action were recognized; and, lastly, that the special session was an opportunity to reaffirm the commitments undertaken in Cairo and, in some respects, in Beijing and to redefine future actions.

30. Turning to the subject of UNFPA, she said that her Government was firmly committed to supporting the Fund's activities, which provided high-quality family planning and other reproductive health services to men and women worldwide, even if the Congress had eliminated the contribution formerly earmarked for it.

31. **Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) said that his country attached great importance to international cooperation for the sustainable development of human settlements and the improvement of the social and economic conditions of urban and rural populations. In that context, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements played a vital role as guarantor of the implementation of the decisions taken at the Habitat II Conference.

32. The initial measures taken to reorganize the work of the Centre were a step in the right direction; however, further efforts must be made in order to accelerate the implementation of the Habitat II goals.

33. The problems relating to human settlements were multisectoral in nature; however, in the context of the reforms undertaken, the Centre should preserve its individuality and autonomy. At the same time, the clustering of its administrative and financial functions with those of United Nations agencies located in Nairobi would enable it to focus its efforts on its primary tasks.

34. One field of activity that was vital to the Centre was the search for ways and means of mobilizing additional financial resources, for example, by strengthening the cooperation of Habitat with UNDP, UNEP and UNIDO, with a view to implementing the recommendations of the Istanbul Conference.

35. An important factor in speeding up the reforms introduced by the countries with economies in transition could be the strengthening of assistance from the Centre on the elaboration of draft laws, the transfer of ecologically sound technology and the seconding of international experts to major construction projects. The implementation of cooperation programmes between Habitat and the countries with economies in transition would help to implement United Nations Commission on Human Settlements resolution 16/4 concerning that group of countries.

36. The issue of population and development must be considered in the context of the preparation of the special session of the General Assembly for a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. At that important session, Member States should develop a concerted approach on joint action to be taken to fulfil the objectives of the International Conference on Population and

Development on the basis of a critical evaluation of the successes and failures since 1994.

37. He supported the idea underlying the preparatory process, namely, not to reconsider the agreements reached in Cairo, but rather to work on elaborating concrete recommendations to solve pending problems, taking into account new facts that had surfaced since the Conference. It was important to envisage the task in the context of the coordinated and integrated implementation of the decisions taken at the major world conferences, so as to reinforce the synergy and complementarity of measures taken in that regard.

38. Without doubt, Member States themselves bore the main responsibility for implementing the Programme of Action of the Conference; however, international cooperation also played an important part in that regard.

39. The countries with economies in transition, including the Russian Federation, were facing serious population problems, whose growing acuteness required the international community's attention. In the Russian Federation, a particularly worrisome problem was the persistence of very high mortality rates, especially for men and infants. There had also been an acceleration of the ageing of the population, with those over 60 representing 16 per cent of the population, while the segment of those under 15 had fallen to 21 per cent.

40. Another serious problem was that of migration, in that the collapse of the Soviet Union had caused massive displacement of the population. There were also many illegal immigrants.

41. The importance of gathering demographic data in designing policy should be emphasized. One very useful source of data for decision-making was the population census. However, for reasons of financial difficulties, his Government had been forced to postpone the population census scheduled for 1999. Since the Russian Federation was not alone in that situation, and in view of the usefulness of population census data for demographic research, the international community should consider providing assistance to countries, where needed, to enable them to carry out those important surveys.

42. **Mr. Kolby** (Norway), referring to item 93 (f), said that the Programme of Action of the Conference on Population and Development had shifted the focus away from population growth targets to a people-oriented approach to development. That represented a major step forward towards achieving a better balance between population growth and economic development.

43. When the General Assembly had decided to convene a special session for a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action, it had never been a question of renegotiating the existing agreements, and Member States should therefore refrain from presenting new proposals to modify the content of the Cairo Final Document. Moreover, a number of considerations should govern the five-year review. Firstly, every United Nations organization should participate actively in the review of progress achieved and issues still to be tackled in accordance with its own mandate, in order to make as broad an appraisal as possible. Secondly, population issues could no longer be treated in isolation from other areas, such as development or human rights, and the review should therefore look at progress made in linking those issues with national policy and with global development programmes. Thirdly, the extent to which women had better access to information, education, resources and high-quality reproductive services and, at the same time, the role of men with regard to issues of human reproduction should also be examined. While it was true that much progress had been made in reproductive health, an effort must be made to ensure that the changes represented a holistic, integrated approach and were not simply add-ons of specific services to existing infrastructure. Moreover, it had never been a question of implementing the Programme of Action fully in five years. It was impossible to make such a major shift in policies and priorities in so short a time. The review process therefore should provide useful lessons for the future, based on the wide range of programmes implemented by Governments, non-governmental organizations, United Nations bodies and financial institutions. An encouraging sign was the new openness towards the needs of youth, and the usefulness and success of youth-related programmes should be considered. On the other hand, progress was too slow with regard to the grave problem of maternal mortality. The special session would provide an opportunity to study all the successful experiences in addressing this tragic phenomenon in order to reduce its high level. The targets for investment of $17 billion by 2000 should be reconsidered, for by all indications the volume of resources must be significantly increased in order to reduce maternal mortality.

44. From a more national perspective, he noted that Norway had accorded high priority to population programmes in its development cooperation efforts and had significantly increased the amounts allocated to it, reaching 4.3 per cent of official development assistance in 1997. His delegation encouraged other countries to follow Norway's example and make an effort in keeping with their true potential, while bearing in mind the related agenda of

poverty reduction, empowerment of women and investment in the social sector.

45. With regard to item 93 (c), he said that pursuant to the Habitat Agenda, Governments had the primary responsibility for implementation at national and local levels, in close collaboration with the other partners; at the same time, however, the United Nations had an essential role to play in raising awareness of the Programme and facilitating its implementation. He welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (A/53/267), which contained constructive proposals on the organization of the special session for an overall review of the implementation of that Agenda. His delegation particularly supported the involvement of local government and civil society in the preparation of the session, as requested in Commission on Human Settlements resolution 16/12.

46. Lastly, his delegation endorsed the proposal that the Commission on Human Settlements should serve as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly and hoped that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, as the focal point for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, would carry out successfully the process of revitalizing the Centre, and it supported the efforts of the Executive Director of the Centre to establish a solid and sound basis for the Centre's future work.

47. **Mr. Yu Qingtai** (China) noted that as the international community prepared to evaluate the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, encouraging signs were beginning to appear: increasing numbers of countries were including population strategies in their overall plans for economic and social development, thereby transforming population activities into a common cause for the whole society, and many countries had made considerable progress towards eradicating poverty and supplying basic social services and education.

48. Unfortunately, the Programme's objectives were still far from being realized. The massive growth of the world's population, the crisis caused by economic and financial turmoil in the context of globalization, the rising number of people living in poverty, had brought new difficulties that must be solved.

49. Consequently, the decision of the General Assembly to convene a special session to review and appraise the implementation of the Programme of Action, take stock of experience, identify any gaps and map out the course for future action was very timely. To begin with, the review should be balanced and comprehensive. While the implementation of the Programme of Action would be reflected ultimately at the national level, it called for efforts at all levels, national, regional and international. Hence the importance of the parts of the Programme that dealt with international cooperation, which should constitute an important component of the review process. In the second place, the special session should focus on taking stock of experiences and lessons, analysing shortcomings and problems that were impeding implementation, and putting forward action-oriented plans to address them. Furthermore, priorities should be identified so that the most urgent problems could be tackled first. The majority of the world's population lived in developing countries, where widespread poverty affected the health and survival of millions of people. Shortages of resources and weaknesses in capacity-building were preventing many countries from making progress. Lastly, it was important to ensure that the spirit and initiative which had made the Cairo Conference such a success marked the special session also, by allowing all interested parties to participate, once again, in the preparatory process and in the actual work of the session. While Governments had played a leading role at the Cairo Conference, the proceedings had been greatly enriched by the participation of all segments of society, especially non-governmental organizations. Consequently, he hoped that the President of the General Assembly would, in accordance with the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 52/188, take all necessary measures to lay the groundwork for such fruitful collaboration.

50. As the most populous country in the world, China had placed family planning and sustainable development at the heart of its national development policy. Accordingly, it attached great importance to the special session, in which it intended to play an active part alongside the various Governments and relevant international organizations.

51. **Ms. Wilde** (New Zealand) said that population issues would present the international community with some of its most fundamental challenges in the future, and that in recent years it had become clear that population-related policies should be seen, not as ends in themselves, but as an integral part of social, economic and cultural development. In that connection, the Cairo Conference had brought about a radical shift in thinking on population in relation to development. Population programmes had come to include, in an integrated fashion, elements such as youth reproductive health that had previously been treated separately.

52. New Zealand remained committed to the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, both in its official development assistance (ODA) programmes and in its domestic policy. A significant proportion of its ODA

was allocated in such a way as simultaneously to further population and development objectives, such as human resources development (education and training), gender equity and basic health. To mention only one of a number of examples of close cooperation with Governments of the South Pacific, New Zealand had launched a South Pacific Regional Health Initiative that addressed those very themes and also included health sector capacity-building and health promotion, including sexual and reproductive health issues. Similarly, it had substantially increased its contributions to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

53. Concerning the special session of the General Assembly to review the Cairo Programme of Action, New Zealand would like to see emphasis given to strengthening coordination among United Nations agencies, Governments and other actors, such as development banks and civil society. It was keenly aware of the constraints that were impeding implementation of the Programme of Action, including the increase in poverty worldwide, the persistence of gender inequality and governmental restrictions on participation by civil society, but it hoped that the international forum that was scheduled to be held in The Hague in 1999 would be able to address those constraints.

54. In order for the Programme of Action to be effective, the outcomes of the Conference would have to feed back into domestic policy formulations. Recent international meetings on population issues, including the high-level regional meeting concerning Asia and the Pacific that had been held recently in Bangkok, had contributed to the establishment of the political commitment needed to integrate developmental, population and environmental strategies at global, regional, national and local levels. Although the principal responsibility for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the decisions of other major United Nations conferences lay at the national level, the United Nations had an important role to play in assisting and supporting countries, especially the least developed countries, in meeting the challenges confronting them.

55. **Mr. Öztürk** (Turkey) said, with reference to Habitat II, that in the context of the prospective revitalization of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, changes had been taking place in the Centre's management for over a year. The team of professionals brought in by the acting Executive Director had already produced the first two parts of its three-part report, which, it was hoped, would lead to fruitful results in the revitalization process.

56. Pending the next session of the Commission on Human Settlements, there were two points that should be noted. In the first place, concerning the proposals which the Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements had made on the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Habitat, it was time to end the discussion and to take the necessary decisions, so that, on that basis, the Commission would be in a position to give guidance on future action. In the second place, it was essential that the Centre be provided with the financial resources it needed in order to assume its appropriate role; otherwise, it would continue to lose contracts and projects to other agencies, for want of the necessary personnel. It was also time to put an end to the crisis of confidence that had affected the management of the Centre by supporting the acting Executive Director, failing which, the Centre might be headed for a political crisis that would jeopardize its very existence.

57. In pursuance of the outcomes of the Istanbul Conference, his Government proposed to establish a Habitat regional office serving a large number of countries in Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, thereby contributing to the decentralization process in which the Centre was already engaged. It hoped to receive the support of the regions concerned for the inception and execution of the project.

58. **Ms. Olszowska** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that her organization continued to give great importance to the relationship between population and development. Demographic factors influenced the pace and quality of economic and social development, the use of natural resources and overall environmental conditions, and they, in turn, affected demographic factors. Sustainable development required the adoption of modes of production and consumption that fostered the optimal use of resources. That was why, despite the recent downturn in world population growth rates, there was still a long way to go before maternal and infant morbidity and mortality rates were meaningfully lowered, fertility rates were further reduced and world population was stabilized.

59. UNESCO was actively engaged in preparations for the review and appraisal, in 1999, of the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action. That process should afford a means of reinforcing the commitments made in 1994.

60. In October 1998 UNESCO had organized the first World Conference on Higher Education. Population had been one of the key issues preoccupying the academic community. In many countries, education was seen as a vehicle for social development and a means for contributing

to the action of Governments and other civic institutions engaged in solving social problems. A key ingredient in the development and transformation of societies was the training of future economic and political decision makers. The training of demographers and other population specialists should therefore stress development policy analysis. UNESCO continued to give substantive and technical support to Governments as well as institutions, groups and experts in order to produce guidelines for teachers and educational institutions, prepare basic curricula and evaluation instruments and develop curricula for adults, teacher training programmes and instruments and guidelines for the utilization of new technologies.

61. Through such activities UNESCO would continue to participate in the inter-agency mechanisms for follow-up to the decisions of the major United Nations conferences, particularly the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. In that context, the Technical Support Service had played a key role in the strengthening of inter-agency, interdisciplinary and intersectoral cooperation in the area of population and development. That innovative mechanism must be maintained and reinforced.

62. The review in the year 2000 of decisions adopted at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All would provide a new opportunity to reaffirm the key role of education.

63. **Mr. Todjinou** (Benin) raised the question of the progress made since the Istanbul Conference in 1996 and the implementation of the decisions adopted at that time. He asked what steps needed to be taken to prepare the special session of the General Assembly in 2001 for an overall review of the implementation of the decisions taken at Habitat II.

64. His delegation wished the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements to be reinforced and revitalized, since it needed increased material, financial and human resources to carry out its programme of work successfully. It was important to ensure that resources were properly managed. He expressed satisfaction with the work of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation and urged the international community to take greater interest in its work. He also called on all the organizations, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions to provide unconditional support for the Habitat Agenda and to play a more active role in its implementation, paying special attention to the developing countries, especially the African countries and the least developed countries. Effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda in those countries required the mobilization of additional financial resources and more concerted international cooperation.

65. At the national level, his Government had begun a process of decentralization which should lead to the transfer of responsibilities in the area of land ownership, had created a national fund for housing in 1993, and had launched several housing construction projects financed by private banks. In 1996, it had begun an urban strategy aimed at solving land ownership problems, improving the functioning of the real estate market and implementing new development strategies. Those efforts, which were already yielding satisfying results, must be continued with the assistance of development partners.

66. It was important to involve civil society in the special session in 2001. Participants must consider, amongst other issues, the institutional, juridical, administrative and financial constraints which hampered the execution of national plans. United Nations organizations must define the actions which they intended to undertake within the framework of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and the Bretton Woods institutions must submit a review of their efforts for the promotion of viable human settlements. Another issue to be addressed was the mobilization of new and additional financial resources. By way of preparation, his delegation hoped that the Commission on Human Settlements, meeting in special session, would take on the role of preparatory committee.

67. **Mr. Pranaitis** (Lithuania) said that his country's transition to a market economy was a difficult one and the housing situation had been adversely affected. Many households were waiting for housing, yet the rate of new housing construction had decreased fivefold. Existing housing stock was in poor condition. There was nevertheless reason for optimism: GDP had risen 5.7 per cent in 1997 and was expected to rise 7 per cent in 1998. Inflation had been only 1.8 per cent for the first nine months of 1998. Construction activity had increased by nearly 26 per cent. Since young people had been the most seriously affected by the difficulties of the transition period, young families under the age of 25 were receiving assistance to acquire housing. Measures had also been taken to help low-income families to rent or buy housing.

68. Efforts were under way to ensure that 25 per cent of available housing was social housing. To that end, municipalities were being encouraged to assume greater responsibility for the construction of such housing and a substantial part of the national budget had been allotted to that effort. With a view to joining the European Union,

legislation was being harmonized with that of the European countries; a cooperation agreement had been concluded with the European Union in the housing and construction sector. The concept of sustainable development, which closely linked economic, social and environmental concerns, was well understood and the Ministry of Construction and Urban Development and the Ministry of Environmental Protection had been merged as the Ministry of the Environment. Cooperation agreements had been signed with, among others, the Ministries of the Environment of Denmark, the Netherlands and Finland.

69. **Mr. Paiva** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that in policy documents and public statements, IOM had always highlighted the importance of the consensus on international migration which had been achieved at Cairo. He stressed that the IOM strategy was based in large part on chapter X of the Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development. Globalization in the flow of goods, capital and information had clearly had a major impact on international population movements. Migration policy decisions in one country or subregion inevitably had an impact on other countries or regions. It was therefore essential to coordinate and harmonize policies and programmes adopted in that area, as recommended by the aforementioned Programme of Action.

70. IOM supported Governments' efforts to improve international dialogue on migration issues. With respect to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and neighbouring countries, IOM continued to support the follow-up to the 1996 Conference addressing the problems of refugees, displaced persons and returnees by supporting dialogue on implementation of the Programme of Action of the Conference. It had also undertaken a major technical cooperation programme aimed at improving and harmonizing national migration legislation and structures in the countries of the region. IOM also continued to promote the sharing of information between CIS countries and experts from other regions by organizing seminars and training activities. In Central and North America, IOM was providing logistic and technical support to the regional consultations launched in 1996 under the name of the Puebla process. In Asia, it was supporting the Manila process, launched in 1996, which provided various countries with an opportunity to exchange information on irregular migration and trafficking in human beings; it also co-sponsored the Asia-Pacific consultations with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

71. IOM organized workshops on national migration policy, technical consultations on migration legislation, and training workshops for officials responsible for the implementation of migration policies. A new course on the law and international migration policy was about to be launched as a joint venture with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). That course was a concrete example of inter-agency collaboration aimed at assisting developing countries and countries in transition to better manage migration issues.

72. **Mr. Canchola** (Mexico) said that consideration of the Programme of Action adopted at the Cairo Conference should make it possible to exchange experience, review the problems encountered and propose measures to achieve the goals set by the Conference. In the context of the follow-up to the Conference, Mexico had established a national population programme (1995–2000), designed in particular to continue reducing the population growth rate, attenuate the effects of high democratic growth, improve the status of women, strengthen the family, reorganize regional development and redistribute the population within the national territory. The programme promoted decentralization by supporting the work of Mexican institutions dealing with education, employment, health, social security and housing. Efforts were also being made to associate all the actors concerned, such as enterprises and non-governmental organizations, with the action undertaken in the fields of population and development.

73. International cooperation was of the utmost importance for the implementation of the Programme of Action. The process associated with the Cairo Conference should not become a simple exchange of experiences. It was essential to seize the opportunity to strengthen international cooperation with a view to achieving the goals set.

74. **Mr. Miller** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that growing urbanization was already having profound implications for the way in which people lived and worked. Furthermore, urbanization was taking place in the context of both globalization and a growing tendency towards deregulation and informalization of employment. It was in that context that ILO intended to make a contribution, in collaboration with its partners, to the implementation of the outcome of Habitat II.

75. The Habitat Agenda devoted considerable attention to the close relationship between employment and the two overarching themes of Habitat II: adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world. ILO had drawn up a programme aimed at promoting the use of labour-intensive technologies in both developing and transitional economies. Infrastructure investments provided

an opportunity for both national and local governments to create jobs, especially in the construction industry.

76. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the Istanbul Conference (A/53/267), which stated in particular that the special session of the General Assembly should review the specific contributions of different partners to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda at the national and local levels, he observed that Governments, employers and workers, all of whom were represented in ILO, had played an active role in preparing the Conference. The social partners should likewise be directly involved in preparations for the special session on follow-up to Habitat II planned for the year 2001.

77. ILO had recently released urban employment guidelines which should help local governments to create jobs. In the context of its contribution to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, ILO was currently developing an urban employment programme focused on more and better jobs in the informal sector aimed, among other things, at improving the living and working environment in poor urban neighbourhoods and increasing the capacity of national and municipal governments to create jobs in cities; it would also promote the adoption of innovative approaches to urban job creation.

78. ILO viewed the preparations for the special session on follow-up to Habitat II as complementary to the follow-up to other major conferences, particularly the World Summit for Social Development. In that context, it was looking forward to contributing actively to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the preparations for the session.

79. **Mr. Hanif** (Pakistan) said that the Cairo Conference had brought about a fundamental shift in the approach to the issues of population and development. Instead of setting targets to control population, the Conference had emphasized human development, and in particular the empowerment of women, as a key to controlling population growth, promoting development and protecting the environment. Although that approach had been widely accepted, a preliminary review indicated that progress had not been very satisfactory. The world population was projected to reach 9.5 billion in 2050, with more than 8 billion people in the developing countries. It would be very difficult to feed that population, given the unsustainable patterns of consumption and production in developed countries.

80. In order to slow its population growth, Pakistan had recast its population programme on the basis of the approaches adopted at the Cairo Conference, so as to focus on reproductive health, the empowerment of women, and partnership with non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Encouraging results had already been achieved and the Government was committed to accelerating its efforts during its ninth five-year plan. The programme would seek to reduce the population growth rate to 1.7 per cent by the year 2003. The allocation for the programme had been increased but fell far short of the resources required to realize the goals of the Cairo Conference.

81. The session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Cairo Conference would provide an opportunity to analyse objectively the constraints impeding the development of effective strategies for the implementation of the Programme of Action. One major constraint was, of course, the lack of resources; there had been a considerable shortfall in the proportion of resources expected from the international community. The reorientation resulting from the Cairo consensus could not be implemented unless the necessary means were available. It was to be hoped that the International Forum to be held in The Hague in 1999 would formulate action-oriented recommendations concerning the implementation of the Programme of Action.

82. The unsustainable pressure created by the enormous growth of the world population threatened to neutralize the efforts made by the developing countries to achieve economic and social development. It was in the interest of the entire world community to work together to address that threat.

83. **Mr. Yoon** (Republic of Korea) said that the review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference should focus on changing policies and operational experiences at the country level, seek to identify obstacles and propose future action to achieve the goals set.

84. His country had achieved very good results with its population and family planning programmes, which could serve as models for other developing countries. The authorities had succeeded in controlling population growth and were currently concentrating on improving the quality of life, particularly with regard to reproductive health and gender equity.

85. The purpose of the special session scheduled for 1999 should not be to renegotiate the agreements reached at the Cairo Conference in 1994 but to ensure their implementation. It would be unreasonable to evaluate each country's programme without taking into account their specific social, economic and cultural differences. For instance, different criteria should be applied to countries with low birth rates and countries with high birth rates. Furthermore, since the ultimate purpose of the Cairo

Programme of Action was to improve the quality of life, health issues should be accorded priority with a view to achieving that goal at the national level. All countries should carry out a census in the next few years with United Nations assistance.

86. With regard to sustainable human settlements, urgent action should be taken to implement the commitments made at Habitat II. Countries should exchange information on their best practices and their capacity-building activities at the local level. Local governments played a vital role in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements was administering many important programmes and should therefore be strengthened. Habitat had not succeeded in transforming its operational activities into policy statements that could serve as a model for every country in the field of human settlements. In that regard, he welcomed the reorganization of the Centre's work, and hoped that it would have positive results.

87. **Mr. Myint** (Myanmar), referring to the question of human settlements, described the positive results that Myanmar had achieved in its implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the success of which was attributable to close cooperation among intergovernmental organizations and other actors of civil society.

88. The rapid increase in the population of Yangon, the capital of Myanmar, had created a critical situation. All over the city, squatters lived in a growing number of shanty towns without adequate sanitary conditions. The Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development had therefore launched an urban development programme based on cooperation among the local populace, the local authorities, the private sector and the government agencies concerned. Some shanty town areas had been selected as pilot projects; the local populace had been included in the decision-making process and their suggestions had been incorporated into the initial plan. Most families living in those ramshackle huts had no legal right to be there. They had been offered a sum of money to vacate their dwellings, since that had been what they had asked for. The families that had chosen not to take the cash option would be given full ownership of modern apartments. Some families would be able to purchase, with the money they had received, land and a house in the suburbs of Yangon. That formula had been supported by all sectors of the population concerned. Many other projects based on that plan were currently being implemented in accordance with the objectives of the Habitat Agenda. Although Myanmar's resources were insufficient, it sought to allocate them in such a way as to ensure their maximum effectiveness. Nevertheless, in order to achieve the objectives of the Habitat Agenda, Myanmar, like many other developing countries, would require financial and technical assistance from the United Nations system and other multilateral and bilateral organizations.

89. **Ms. Mphutlane** (Lesotho) said that the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/53/407) provided detailed information on the scope and priorities of the review to be undertaken and the role of the United Nations system and civil society, and referred to the various regional and international meetings that had been scheduled. It was a useful and informative document.

90. At the time of the International Conference on Population and Development, Lesotho had already adopted a very ambitious population policy as an integral part of its Fifth Five-Year Development Plan. Lesotho was a mountainous, landlocked country; owing to soil erosion, arable land had fallen from 13 per cent in 1966 to less than 10 per cent at the time of preparation of the Fifth Development Plan. Since agriculture was the mainstay of Lesotho's economy, the need for a population management policy that took account of the resource base had become critical. A family planning programme had been actively pursued as part of the Maternal and Child Health Programme. Educational campaigns targeting all population groups had also been launched to that end. Institutional mechanisms had been envisaged with a view to implementing that policy.

91. Following the Cairo Conference in 1994, Lesotho had established the Department of Population and Manpower Planning; information seminars and workshops had been organized for different groups. Lesotho's safe motherhood initiative programme was one of the most successful in Africa and served as a model for other southern African countries.

92. In the area of data collection, Lesotho had conducted a census in 1996, which had indicated that its population was about 2 million. Studies on adolescent health and the labour force had also been carried out. The study on the labour force indicated an unemployment rate of about 40 per cent; it was believed that the recent political turmoil in Lesotho had further contributed to that already alarming situation.

93. Lesotho remained an active participant in the population activities of the United Nations system; in particular, it frequently consulted the UNFPA country office in Maseru and was represented at regional and subregional meetings organized by the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Organization of African Unity.

94. **Ms. Sadik** (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) thanked delegations, in particular the delegations of Indonesia and Austria, for their very positive comments on the ICPD + 5 process; those comments would be taken duly into account. She welcomed the fact that delegations had acknowledged that the Cairo agreements should not be renegotiated at the special session of the General Assembly in 1999.

95. Needs in the area of census-taking were considerable, in particular in the countries in transition and the least developed countries of the sub-Saharan region. Within the framework of the Economic Commission for Europe, UNFPA had organized a meeting for the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics of Central Asia in order to consider that matter, and it was currently organizing another meeting with donor partners to consider the needs of sub-Saharan Africa.

96. With regard to resources, she said that the industrialized countries should study Norway's proposal on the allocation of 4 per cent of official development assistance to reproductive health programmes.

97. **Mr. Habermann** (Director, Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that the importance of censuses had been recognized both by the Statistical Commission and Commission on Population and Development, which had adopted resolutions that emphasized the need for all countries to have data on population censuses.

98. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs had issued guidelines and recommendations for the next series of surveys on housing and population censuses.

99. The Department had also engaged in useful cooperation with UNFPA and with countries at the bilateral level. More recently, in the context of its efforts to establish subregional networks for conducting censuses, it had recognized the importance of strengthening regional capacities to enable countries to assist one another in census-related activities. That had already been done in the South Pacific region, and a training course for about 10 countries had been organized with a view to developing a common approach in the area of data processing so that information could be analysed in the entire region. A similar programme, to be conducted in cooperation with UNFPA, had been envisaged for the Central Asian region. A workshop would also be organized in South Africa for the countries members of the Southern African Development Community; the programme would also focus on capacity-building at the subregional level.

100. The Statistical Commission had recently adopted and issued revised guidelines for statistics relating to migration.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.